

The Driller's Digest

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This newsletter is published as a service to certified well contractors and others in the groundwater industry. Suggestions for articles for publication in the newsletter are welcome.

Read Your Rules!

by WCC Staff

In June a copy of the revised Chapter 27 Well Contractor Certification Rules was mailed to every certified well contractor. The new rule book was provided to each well contractor to make sure they were able to read and understand the rule changes.

The biggest changes are in the .0800 section. Now that you are curious, read that section to see what it is and what has changed. Make sure to read

all 13 pages of the rule book as it covers certification requirements from application to renewal and disciplinary action.

A little time spent perusing the rules now may prevent time dealing with unintended rule violations down the road.

If you would like additional copies, the rules are available on our website, www.wellcontractors.nc.gov. For hard copies contact Joanne Rutkofske, WCC Staff, at 919-707-5881.

Happy Reading!

The Importance of Monitoring That Private Well...

by Lorna Withrow, PE, DHHS/On-Site Water Protection Branch

Although the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has regulations that govern drinking water quality, those rules do not apply to private water wells. In addition, except for sample collection and analysis required within thirty (30) days after the local health department issues a certificate of completion for a newly constructed private drinking water, private well water quality is not regulated in North Carolina. Therefore, well owners are responsible for the quality of the water that comes from their private wells. In light of this, the EPA recommends that private water well owners have the water quality tested on an annual basis.

Routine monitoring (i.e., sample collection and analysis) can help determine whether or not the water is safe for consumption. It can also help identify contaminants that may lead to potential health risks. Some contaminants

may be from naturally occurring sources of pollution while other may be introduced as a result of human activities. Naturally occurring sources are microorganisms (e.g., bacteria, viruses, parasites, etc.), radionuclides and their by-products (e.g., uranium, radium, radon, etc.), nitrate and nitrites, heavy metals (e.g., arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, selenium, etc.), and fluoride. High levels of some of these pollutants occur naturally in parts of North Carolina.



For instance, a study conducted of North Carolina private wells water quality analyses results indicated that of 63,856 private well water records collected between 1998 and 2010, 1,436 wells had arsenic levels that exceeded the maximum contaminant limit (MCL)

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Summary of Civil Penalty Assessments

Penalties for violations of NCGS Chapter 87, Article 7 & 7A vary depending upon the particular facts and circumstances present in each case. Note: only finalized uncontested cases or cases not seeking remission and at the collection stage are included in this list. Payment of fines and corrections of violations may already have occurred.

Richard Mooney

Caldwell County, NC. Allegations of contracting without the benefit of certification, in violation of 15A NCAC 27. Assessed a civil penalty of twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,000.00).

Effective Date 6/9/15 Case # WCC 003-15

WCCC Disciplinary Committee

Randall E. Cutter-Effective 9/23/15

For violation of Chapter 27 Well Contractor Certification Rule .0601(g). The well contractor was given a letter of reprimand.

Timothy W. Donahue-Effective 9/23/15

For violation of Chapter 27 Well Contractor Certification Rule .0601(g). The well contractor was given a letter of reprimand.

Lloyd J. Mares-Effective 9/23/15

For violation of Chapter 27 Well Contractor Certification Rule .0601(g). The well contractor was given a letter of reprimand.

("The Importance of Monitoring That Private Well", Continued from page 1)

of 10 µg/L. Two hundred thirty-three (233) of those wells were five times or greater ($\geq 5x$) than the arsenic MCL. Based on the same study, counties with a large percentage of private wells that exceeded the arsenic MCL and hence may be of potential concern include Stanly (176 of 849, 20.7%), Union (634 of 3250, 19.5%), Anson (10 of 98, 10.2%), and Montgomery (34 of 372, 9.14%) counties. This is only one example that supports the need for continued monitoring of private water wells beyond what is required by rule after construction. The only way for private well owners to know if their water is safe is to monitor the water quality on a routine basis. Here's to safe, clean drinking water for all. Drink up.

Septic System Operation and Maintenance

by Patricia M. Angoli, PE, DHHS/On-Site Water Protection Branch

Septic systems, like all wastewater treatment systems, require some minimum operation and maintenance. Septic systems do not require as much operation and maintenance as large wastewater treatment plants, but the solids do need to be removed and the drainfield walked over on a regular basis.

The septic tank removes solids from the wastewater entering the tank. While the solids will decompose some, they will not completely decompose in the septic tank. At some point the solids will need to be removed from the septic tank. The septic tank should be pumped when all the solids in the septic tank from both the sludge layer and the scum layer measure more than one-third of the liquid depth in the tank. Not all septic tanks need to be pumped on the same schedule. Some homes or businesses (think fast food restaurants) generate more solids in their wastewater. Others generate less.

The only way to definitely know when the septic tank must be pumped is to measure the level of sludge and scum in the septic tank. This can be done with a piece of equipment called a Sludge Judge. This is one of the most common tools for measuring the sludge and scum layers in a septic tank. The Sludge Judge is made of 3/4 inch plastic pipe with a valve on the bottom that traps the sludge, effluent, and scum in the plastic pipe so that the operator can evaluate the amount of sludge and scum in the septic tank. If the septic tank does need to be pumped, a licensed septic tank pumper should be contacted to pump out the tank and dispose of the septage properly.

At the outlet end of the septic tank is an effluent filter. The effluent filter helps remove additional solids from the septic tank effluent. This filter also needs to be cleaned on a regular basis.

Maintenance for a drainfield is different than maintenance for a septic tank. The drainfield should be walked over to determine if effluent is coming to the ground surface. If the drainfield is dry and no problems are found, the drainfield is considered to be operating correctly at that time. If the septic tank effluent is discharging to the ground surface in the drainfield area, the septic system is failing and actions need to be taken to prevent the effluent from surfacing. When a septic system is failing, the homeowner

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or the person who finds the failure needs to contact the local health department immediately. Health department staff will visit the site to try and determine the reason for system failure and repair options.

If the system has a pump, the pump needs to be checked on a regular basis. The pump should be turned on to make sure that it works and is pumping septic tank effluent to the drainfield. While the pump is pumping effluent to the drainfield, the drainfield should be walked over to see if any effluent is surfacing.

Chairman's Corner - Local Rules

by Daniel Ortiz, REHS

First allow me to introduce myself, I am Daniel Ortiz, REHS and current Chairman of the WCCC. I hold the position of Environmental Health Director for Cumberland County and have around 20 years' experience at the county level in permitting and inspecting wells and septic systems.

This article is meant to bring your attention to local well rules/regulations. Here in Cumberland County we have an irrigation well ordinance that requires permitting and inspection of irrigation wells. Other counties have rules and/or regulations regarding monitoring wells, irrigation wells and geothermal wells. Some counties do not have any local rules and/or regulations.

Please remember that as a professional it is your responsibility to adhere to all state and local well standards. Not knowing is not acceptable. Always check with the local permitting authority to verify what is or is not required. Having a good working relationship with your local environmental health specialist will make your job a lot easier. Remember if you have any questions you can contact the environmental health office for any specific local requirements.

Failure to comply with state or local well standards could result in a disciplinary meeting. Please follow all applicable rules/regulations so we all don't have to meet in Raleigh.

North Carolina Well Contractors Certification Commission

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Commission Members

Daniel Ortiz, REHS Chairman -Autryville
Jonathan Dills Vice Chairman -Winston-Salem
Casey Champion, REHS, NCWC -Oxford
John Boyette, Jr., NCWC -Wilson
David Brown, NCWC -Hamptonville
Thomas Whitehead, NCWC -Wilmington
William "Billy" Yow, NCWC -Greensboro

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www.wellcontractors.nc.gov

Certification Today

Total number certified.....1052
 Total number of applicants for certification.....50
 Certifications currently suspended.....0

NC Division of Water Resources Water Quality Regional Operations Section

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/aps>

Asheville_____828-296-4500
 Fayetteville_____910-433-3300
 Mooresville_____704-663-1699
 Raleigh_____919-791-4200
 Washington_____252-946-6481
 Wilmington_____910-796-7215
 Winston-Salem_____336-771-5000

NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health Environmental Health Section

<http://www.ehs.ncpublichealth.com>

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Online at www.wellcontractors.nc.gov

Exam Goes Closed Book

by WCC Staff

During the August 2015 meeting of the Well Contractors Certification Commission a motion was passed to switch from an open book exam to a closed book exam. Going closed-book better aligns North Carolina with other states regarding certification of well contractors.

Beginning January 1, 2016 the well contractor certification exam will become a closed book exam. Applicants will no longer be allowed to bring reference materials into the exam test site. Additionally, the rules and statute reference materials that have been provided in the past at the exam will no longer be available.

Applicants are encouraged to study the reference materials the exam is derived from (posted on www.wellcontractors.nc.gov) prior to sitting for the examination.

If you have questions regarding this Commission decision, please contact the WCC staff.

Mailing address updated?

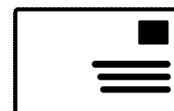
by WCC Staff

Have you moved or changed employers in the past year? If so, did you notify the Commission office with a WCC-9 Address Change Form?

The Well Contractor Certification Rules require well contractors to give notice within 30 days of a change. If you are unsure if you sent in a WCC-9 or want to confirm the notice has been received by the WCC office please contact us at 919-707-5882 (Drew) or 919-707-5881 (Joanne).

In previous years, the WCCC Review Committee has required WCC staff to request disciplinary action against well contractors when renewal notices are returned due to incorrect mailing addresses.

Keeping your contact information updated will avoid a trip to Raleigh, and keep your name out of the Driller's Digest!



Report Uncertified Well Contractors to the local health department or call (919) 707-5882